



# Forest Chatter



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## From the President ...

Even though we are already well into 2020, I would like to take this opportunity to share with you the milestones we accomplished together in 2019. Thanks to you, our wonderful donors and supporters, we could:

- welcome 4 newly born babies in the wild,
- rescue 17 orangutans, and help them with immediate care,
- care for 71 sun bears,
- celebrate the release of 76 orangutans in safe forests,

- care for over 500 orangutans in our two rehabilitation centres, and
- start restoring what we lost in the devastating fires.

Please also check out this short video of the highlights. None of this would be possible without you!

But, of course, we don't stop here. 2020 brings new challenges and new success stories. So far, we have rescued one orangutan and released several lucky ones into their forest homes.

You will find more exciting stories on the following pages.

Happy reading!

Tony Gilding, President



## A giving hand that touches the world

**"Wow, so cool!", that was and is the reaction of people all over the world looking at the incredible photo below. An orangutan is offering her hand to a man standing in muddy water. How human, how friendly, how touching! We agree, it is an amazing photo, and we are happy to share the story behind it.**



The female orangutan pictured in the photo is 25-year-old Anih, one of our unreleasable orangutans. She lives on one of BOS Foundation's sanctuary islands that are part of the Samboja Lestari Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre in East Kalimantan.

BOS built several islands like this for orangutans that cannot be released to the wild. These islands have limited access to prevent contact between humans and orangutans. Exceptions are only being made for medical treatment carried out by veterinarians, for other BOSF staff and related agencies with special permits.

The man in the photo is Syahrul. The BOSF technician is cleaning the river of overgrown grasses and excess sedimentation, to maintain the open, forest-like conditions on the island. Anih and Syahrul have known each other for almost 30 years.

"In this photo, we will never know exactly what happened", says BOS Foundation CEO Jamartin Sihite. "Anih may have looked like she was offering help to Syahrul. However,

she very easily could have been asking for food from Syahrul, as Anih and some other orangutans are still dependent on humans."

Sihite explains that the lengthy period of captivity that Anih and other orangutans have endured prior to being handed over to BOSF is "one of the biggest hurdles we must overcome in the rehabilitation process in order to return them to their wild, forest homes". Other challenges include the limited availability of release sites, the low number of naturalistic islands for unreleasable orangutans, and the length of captivity prior to rescue that makes the number of orangutans like Anih all too high.

We are very pleased to see the positive response from the public towards this 'viral' photo. Seeing this, we are left wondering how wild animals can be even friendlier to humans than we are to them. However, they belong in their habitat, not with us. By protecting their environment, we help to preserve and maintain the balance of nature.



## “There are no words for how amazing it was”

**Ashling Hartigan is our Australian Orangutan Freedom winner who went on a trip of a lifetime to Kalimantan, Borneo. Shortly after her return to Australia, we asked the 28-year-old public servant and animal lover about her adventure.**

**What was your first reaction when you heard that you had won the trip to Borneo?**

SCAM! Delete email! It wasn't until a couple of hours later when I received a text message from Tony, the president of BOS Australia, saying I had won and to check my emails, that I went to my delete folder and read the email again. Even then, I still thought it was a scam.

**What did you know about orangutans and the BOS Foundation before joining the Orangutan Freedom campaign?**

Only the very basics; that orangutans are endangered, and BOSF helps save them. But as basics go, they're pretty spot on.

**The trip to Borneo was the first trip all by yourself. You must have been super excited...**

Not really. I think I was just in too much shock and still waiting for that other shoe to drop that I wasn't allowing myself to get excited. I was too scared that something was going to go wrong and it would be taken away from me.

**Luckily nobody took it away from you, and you spent ten exhilarating days exploring Borneo and our programs. Which were your top three favorite experiences you will never forget?**

Of course, the number one best experience was releasing Suci from her cage! The feeling of lifting the cage door and seeing this ball of orange fur run out to freedom; there are no words for how amazing it was.

My second favourite is something you wouldn't really expect to be a favourite – the trips we had on the rickety bus with no air-conditioning.

If it wasn't for that bus, I never would have got to experience the beauty of the Bornean countryside and its people. With my head sticking out the window with my starkly pale Irish skin and blonde hair, I got to see the laughter and joy my foreign weirdness brought to the locals. Driving by, even for just a second, the locals would stare, smile, wave, call out and laugh.

My third favourite was the amazing people I got to meet and share the experience with, not only the other winners but also the BOS guides and the Samboja Lodge staff.

The friendships I made on this trip I know will be something I cherish for life, and I can't wait until our ten-year reunion!

**For all of us that have never experienced an orangutan release, can you tell us a little bit more about your emotions, feelings, thoughts before, during and after the release, and especially while opening the cage?**

“Don't drop it! Don't drop it!” That's all I was thinking at the time of opening the cage. I was so scared that I would drop this massively heavy metal cage on this tiny six-year-old orangutan. But once she was out and safe, all I could think was about how much I wanted to cuddle her and join her in her feast of fruit.

Paulina, one of the amazing BOS guides, had told me that the orangutans can sense your feelings, so if you release an orangutan and you're scared or anxious, they will feel scared and anxious too. Therefore, while I was giving Suci her pre-release bananas, I spoke to her and let her know that she was going



to be free soon and I was so happy that I was there with her.

### What do you love most about orangutans?

How much like us they are! Looking into their eyes, you can see their intelligence and emotion. It is especially easy to see the comparison in the toddlers. While we were at the "Jungle School" with the orangutans, we got to see them play, and it was exactly the same as watching children play.

### What would you tell somebody that has never heard about BOS Foundation's work and who is wondering why she/he should support BOS Australia, for example, by adopting an orangutan?

If you donate to BOSA, you can be sure that the money is going directly



to the care of the orangutans, not to the pockets of the humans who run it. You can trust that your money is getting to where you want it to go. And if you adopt an orangutan, you can be assured that your money is going towards the welfare and development of all the

baby orangutans. I always suggest that people watch the documentary series "Orangutan Jungle School", which shows BOS Foundation's work. It is the best and most entertaining advertisement and so educational. I would love to see it being played in schools.

## Borneo is waiting for you

### While not everybody gets the unique opportunity to release an orangutan as Ashling did, we can promise you a no less exciting adventure.

By joining our Orangutan Volunteer Program, you can spend two weeks at the Samboja Lestari Rehabilitation Centre in East Kalimantan, Borneo. It is currently the home of 123 orangutans, most of whom we prepare for release to the wild. The sanctuary also houses over 60 sun bears. Together with a Borneo Orangutan Survival (BOS) Australia representative and local technicians, you are creating food and play items for orangutans that are essential to their welfare.

Recently a group of students from the TAFE (Technical and Further Education) course "Certificate III in Captive Animals" experienced how much fun such an enrichment and welfare trip can be. Joined by head TAFE teacher Rebecca Coventry and captive teacher/BOS Australia enrichment and welfare coordinator Lou Grossfeldt, the group of 14 students helped the local staff by making hammocks, cleaning enclosures and preparing special food treats for orangutans and sun bears.

But it doesn't end there, says Lou Grossfeldt: "Evenings are spent enjoying an amazing local meal at the lodge with a cold beer and chatting

about the day's events. We also ventured out to the Black River to see wild proboscis monkeys, which was a big hit with the group."

Come and be a part of the solution and save orangutans from extinction!

**Apply now** for our trips from November 2020 to March 2021!

#### Tour dates:

- 7–19 November 2020
- 5–18 December 2020
- 2–15 January 2021
- 6–19 February 2021
- 6–19 March 2021



# HELLO, I AM HANNI PUSPITA SARI



Hanni Puspita Sari is working for the enrichment team at the BOS Foundation's Nyaru Menteng Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre, in Central Kalimantan. Hanni also happens to be the only female in the eight-member team.

### How long have you been working for the BOS Foundation?

I have been working in Nyaru Menteng since 17 November 2000, so for almost 20 years. I started as a surrogate mother, a babysitter for orphaned orangutans, a role I fulfilled until 2008.

### What is your main responsibility as a member of the enrichment team?

Together with my colleagues, I monitor the nutritional intake of every orangutan in the rehabilitation centre, right up until the moment they are released in the forest.

### What is the most challenging part of your work?

I need to make sure we create the best menu for orangutans being trained for a future in the wild, as well as for those who sadly cannot be released. "Enrichment" does not just mean providing tools or toys, or supplementary foods for orangutans. It also relates to their gestures and their interests. I need to be creative and aware of what each individual needs, and know every orangutan we are caring for in Nyaru Menteng, regardless of the different age groups, abilities, and such.

### Can you tell us a little more about your care for the "un-releasable" orangutans?

For these "unreleasable" orangutans, our goal is to make them feel comfortable in their enclosures

before they get their chance to live on a sanctuary island. We need to create certain enrichment tools and provide infrastructure to support their rehabilitation, even if we know they may not be released to the wild. We have to relieve them of boredom and keep their minds occupied, because orangutans experience stress and boredom just like humans.

### What drives and motivates you in your job?

I hope that our work here can come to real fruition someday. We hope the orangutans in our care will live a good life, and that the species will survive. Actually, by helping them return to their forest home, we are doing a good thing for the planet and for all mankind.



**BOS Australia**  
primates helping primates

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Thank you for your continued support.



## We love hearing from you

We know you've been spreading the orangutan word, so why not tell us about what you're up to? Email [contact@orangutans.com.au](mailto:contact@orangutans.com.au) or post your photos online at [facebook.com/bosaustralia](https://www.facebook.com/bosaustralia) or [instagram/bosaustralia](https://www.instagram.com/bosaustralia)

## Can you help us?

Your donations provide food, shelter, protection, medicine and companionship for orangutans in our care. Visit [www.orangutans.com.au](http://www.orangutans.com.au) to help us help them.

Donations by cheque are payable to Borneo Orangutan Survival (BOS) Australia at PO Box 3916, Mosman NSW 2088.

Make a one-off or regular payment via direct debit or by credit card either online or by calling us on +61 2 9011 5455. We now accept **Paypal** donations too! See the link on the homepage of our website.

Save paper and the environment and opt-in to receive our e-letter via email at [contact@orangutans.com.au](mailto:contact@orangutans.com.au)